



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WHITLEY COUNTY FAMILY YMCA ANNOUNCES EXPANSION

Fort Wayne, IN [February 7, 2014] – The Whitley County Family YMCA which is part of the YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne association has launched a \$2,250,000 capital campaign to expand their current YMCA. The expansion will feature an early learning center, kids' gym, natural playground, offices and school age classroom.

The Whitley County Family Y added the Early Learning Childcare program in 2012 in response to a critical community need for licensed full-day childcare. The New Hope Wesleyan Church has provided a temporary location for the program until the Y expansion is completed.

Moving the Early Learning Center to the Y benefits the community in several ways:

- 1) 85 young children can be served (22 more than are currently being served)
- 2) Children can use other Y areas (pool, climbing wall, gymnastics, etc.), enhancing their physical and social development
- 3) Parents with multiple aged children have one convenient drop-off location
- 4) Children and parents develop a stronger connection to the Y, benefitting from programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body.

The Armstrong Early Learning Center wing will feature spacious rooms especially designed to meet children's developmental needs and serve up to 85 children ages six weeks through 5 years old. The layout and décor of these spacious rooms will provide a learning environment that is simple and orderly, enabling the teachers to observe the children so they can properly assist in their developmental growth.

The Armstrong Early Learning Center is named after the Don and Rosie Armstrong family who have demonstrated their passion for education in Whitley County. Rosie was a founding Y board member and they both have been dedicated to the Y since opening in 1996.

The Dekko Foundation has awarded the Y a \$1,000,000 challenge grant toward the expansion. The grant will be given when the Y has raised \$1,250,000 for the project. "Although our grant will help to pay for a building, what we're really investing in is the great things that will happen inside," says Sharon Smith, program director for the Dekko Foundation. "The YMCA staff and board have stepped back to consider what young children need to grow and thrive. That's exactly what the new center will offer."

The Whitley County Community Foundation has awarded a \$150,000 grant toward the expansion. The capital campaign will continue with a proposed groundbreaking of spring 2014, with opening in late 2014.

"We are excited about the opportunity to further our mission by responding to community needs," states Erica Miller, Whitley County Family YMCA Executive Director. "We are very grateful

to the Dekko Foundation, Whitley County Community Foundation, and the Don Armstrong family for their generous support," Miller states.

The Y is dedicated to strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. For more information on how you can help the Y in Allen, Whitley or Wells county communities, please contact Nicole Liddell at 260.918.2144 or Nicole_Liddell@fwymca.org.

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About the Y

The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,700 Ys engage 21 million men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. ymca.net